

Pendleton changes with the times

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN
Capital Press

PENDLETON — Machines rumbled and roared. Looms interlaced colorful yarns at right angles to form cloth. People scurried by, pushing tubs of spools.

Here at Pendleton Woolen Mills, the same family has run the business since 1909. More than 100 years later, Pendleton's brand remains popular, with an online store and 35 retail locations. The mill buys wool from about 170 sheep farms.

The operation's enduring success, industry experts say, is tied to its adaptability. The Bishop family, which has run Pendleton Woolen Mills for generations, has adapted to shifting wool production and changing global markets.

Some of the company's earliest designs, including blankets inspired by Native American culture, remain best sellers. But other aspects of the industry have changed over the century.

The introduction of manmade fibers in the 1880s shrank wool's share of the textile market, especially after polyester was invented in 1941. Americans ditched the itch of prickly wool for softer synthetic fibers.

According to a 2019 Textile Exchange report, sheep wool makes up 1% of global textile fibers. By comparison, polyester constitutes 52% and cotton 24%.

Specific products have also changed. According to a 2021 study in Animal Frontiers, a scientific



John Boston, manager of Pendleton Woolen Mills' Pendleton mill.

journal, apparel wool used to be popular as outer knitwear or woven suits, but as the American workforce has become more casual, people have bought fewer suits.

New opportunities, however, have opened, including growing markets for next-to-skin knitwear and "athleisure" wear made with fine, small-micron wool.

Although Pendleton uses coarser wool to create blankets and rugs, the company uses finer wool for next-to-skin clothing.

New international markets are also emerging, especially among Asia's rising middle classes. According to the Animal Frontiers study, because wool is four to seven times more expensive to produce and process than most fibers, it's

marketed internationally as a luxury niche product.

Wool has also found a place among eco-conscious consumers avoiding manmade fibers.

"I see the push for natural fibers as being good for the wool business," said Dan Gutzman, manager of Pendleton Woolen Mills' wool buying department.

Additionally, the pandemic shifted consumer demands. Though consumers have bought less work attire, Pendleton has seen demand spike for home goods including blankets, rugs and décor and has pivoted to meet that demand.

"COVID was good for the home business," said John Bishop, president of Pendleton Woolen Mills.

Consumers also increasingly



Employees at Pendleton Woolen Mills in Pendleton work beside spinning frames.

want "local" products, for which Pendleton Woolen Mills is well-positioned to tout that it sources wool from many U.S. farms.

Pendleton also buys from Australia, New Zealand, Brazil and Uruguay, but the company sources as much wool as possible — about 40% — from domestic ranches.

According to April Rogers, Pendleton's spokeswoman, some longtime providers include Krebs Livestock, Krebs Sheep Co., Cunningham Sheep Co., Etcheverry Sheep Co., Wixom Livestock, Noh Livestock, Five O Ranch and Ian Anderson Livestock.

Although the mill works with ranches at any scale — buying a few fleeces or buying them by the truckloads — Gutzman encourages farmers with small flocks to pool their wool with others.

Gutzman said farmers should also be aware of market trends. For example, U.S. consumers have been moving toward softer wool, 23 microns or finer.

The domestic value of fine wool from a whitefaced breed like a Rambouillet is worth about three to four times more per pound than coarse blackface sheep wool, according to Gutzman.

Not every farmer can jump into the fine wool industry, however. It takes the right kind of land. Rambouillets are built for arid, rocky ranges.

"You pretty much have to have sheep that fit your land," said Gutzman.

Bishop, the company president, said Pendleton will continue supporting sheep farmers and adapting to the times.

Meal service offers lifeline in pandemic

By JOE SIESS
The Bulletin

During the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, when store shelves were empty and much of daily life came to a grinding halt, seniors in Bend were placed in a particularly difficult spot.

Many, especially those who have underlying health issues and who are not as mobile as they used to be, found themselves not only in fear of leaving their homes and exposing themselves to the virus, but some were unable to get the food and supplies they needed.

Fortunately, volunteers for Meals on Wheels — a program administered by the Council on Aging of Central Oregon that provides seniors in the area with prepared meals free of charge — helped many weather the hardest months of the pandemic.

The program was a lifeline for the Lohoefners — Doug, 74, has cancer and Debbie, 68, is asthmatic — and for Arline Stewart, who lives alone because her husband has Alzheimer's and lives in a care center.

Rachel Dutcher, a Meals on Wheels delivery driver,



Meals on Wheels volunteer Rachel Dutcher packs a meal Tuesday while on her delivery route in Bend.

said the pandemic changed the nature of her visits. Instead of just delivering meals, she found herself checking up on the seniors on her route.

"When COVID hit, it made a sudden impression on me," Dutcher said. "I was essentially the only person they talked to all day."

Debbie and Doug Lohoefer

The Lohoefners met each other while camping near San

Diego, California. Doug was a retired dentist who decided to work as a park ranger and drive a big rig — something he dreamed of doing for many years. The couple got married in 2002 and threw a big country-style wedding for their friends and family.

They moved to Oregon in 2004, spending their days going on long walks together with their dogs, camping and checking out the wildlife. They settled into their home with

their three cats and several parakeets. Deer and blue herons milled about in the yard.

Then came the pandemic. Doug Lohoefer had been diagnosed with a form of leukemia years prior, and Debbie, who is asthmatic, suffered from blood clotting. Both knew they were at high risk from the virus, and took it very seriously.

"We were very scared. We didn't want to leave the house. We didn't want to let anybody in," Debbie recalled of pandemic's early days.

"Once I got the vaccine, I started feeling a little bit better," she said, "more positive."

Doug sat on the couch beside his wife as she spoke and smiled, maskless.

"That is why I am here without a mask," Doug said. Before (the vaccine) I wouldn't even be in here. I'd be in the other room."

Doug and Debbie would order food from places like Costco and Fred Meyer, whose delivery drivers would leave the bags outside the couple's front door. The Lohoefners then sprayed

the bags with Lysol to be extra careful. But all this got expensive. Meals on Wheels came through with five days worth of meals delivered to them by a volunteer driver, a service they value immensely.

The couple remains optimistic and thankful, so much so that they would one day like to help Meals on Wheels.

"One thing we'd like to do is donate back," Doug said, "once we get healthy."

Arline Stewart

Arline Stewart, 84, sat on her couch in her home in Deschutes River Woods catching the last few minutes of "Rock the Block" on HGTV. Her red eyeglass frames complimented her red lipstick.

Stewart has lived on her own since her husband, who suffers from Alzheimer's, moved to Aspen Ridge Memory Care in Bend four years ago. During the pandemic, she felt even more isolated.

"The idea that you couldn't get out — it was very isolating," Stewart said. "Nobody could go to church anymore. We couldn't do anything with family or friends on holidays. Nothing. It was extremely isolating for all of us, the elderly people." While times were tough, thinking about her pandemic struggles didn't get Stewart down.

"There is one good thing about the pandemic," she said grinning. "Just one that I can say... You had to wear a mask all the time, and you saved all kinds of money on makeup," she said laughing. "I imagine the cosmetic people were unhappy with us for a couple of years."

Since she suffered a heart

attack last summer she relies on Meals on Wheels to supplement her diet with something fresh and nutritious. Despite her mobility and independence, it can still be difficult for Stewart to do certain things, and getting meals delivered on a weekly basis is a huge help, she said.

"I was all alone, and I hardly could take care of myself," Stewart said. "I can't stand up long enough or make myself a meal that is nutritious. So, the Meals on Wheels has been a boon to me. And it saves me some money, too because it was so costly for food."

Rachel Dutcher, volunteer for Meals on Wheels

Rachel Dutcher, a retired nurse living in Bend, has been a Meals on Wheels volunteer for about four years. Dutcher said she has about 10 people on her delivery list, but the number of deliveries she makes on any given day can vary.

Dutcher said some of the people she delivers to have chronic lung issues, or are on oxygen, and were already hesitant to leave their homes before COVID.

"They have always been hesitant about getting out," she said. "And COVID made it worse... All of a sudden, their lives sort of collapsed to the size of their house."

People told her they would leave the television on all day just to hear voices, Dutcher said.

"I just realized they were so in need of face-to-face and physical interaction with somebody," she said. "Being able to provide that little bit of interaction, I think it was beneficial on both sides."

This AD is in opposition to Measure #12-80. It is not because we do not want a pool. It is because it adds to the total amount of debt to our citizens that this narrative is pushing. Those that support this Levy, keep saying that "we need a pool". Need and want are two totally different things. When we want these projects, we are adding unnecessary costs upon the Taxpayers Backs. The same people that support this cash cow, are directly responsible for the abolishment of our police. They refused to hold the City of John Day (CJD) accountable for public safety. We NEED a police presence. We can argue all day long about the narrative that they did not have the money in their budget, but the money was there, and the same people that are pushing for this levy has fallen for the propaganda machine of the CJD regarding the resurrection of the Gleason pool and the Bullying going on there.

The JDCC parks & rec has overstepped its original goal, as it was written, when it was formed. To those who have stated, in a failed earlier attempt to form a larger "Taxing District" for a pool, that they did not get a vote. The current Parks & Rec. was never voted on! The main concern of the district was to assure Gleason pool was funded, but the district chose to purchase more land. Thus, taking it off the tax rolls. Add that cost to this scenario. How much money has been spent to refurbish their current office? In the master plan it will be removed. Money wasted. In the Levy, it includes a NEW office, this adds money to the project. This is not the way any Tax dollars should be spent. The Parks and Rec did not know that the CJD was pulling their operating Tax revenues out and spending for the JD URA program that ALL our local Taxpayers are paying for. You can put that figure into the cost created by this Parks and Rec. assault. So, it is just not this LEVY, it is about 12 people making one bad decision after another and pushing their elitist view and pawning it off as child safety and helping the elderly out. If you look at the people pushing this massive assault on our TAX dollars, their addresses, mostly reflect the more affluent in our rural community. VOTE "NO" ON THIS LEVY. MEASURE 12-80. Your costs are much more than the ESTIMATED cost of this project.

NO MEASURE 12-80

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Plan by Bob Pappas

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